

United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/977

18 September 1991

W E D N E S D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

- ◆ Secretary-General decides to deploy an additional 100 United Nations military observers to verify Western Sahara cease-fire.
- ◆ General Committee recommends to General Assembly new agenda item on ending United States embargo against Cuba. Proposes 143-item agenda for Assembly and Main Committees.
- ◆ More than one third of \$400 million needed to fund consolidated inter-agency appeal for Horn of Africa is pledged at donors meeting.
- ◆ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) approves \$12 million for humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to Cambodia.
- ◆ Ballistic missile inspection team -- designated to be the first to use United Nations-provided helicopters -- returns from Iraq.
- ◆ New agenda for development of Africa in 1990s to set continent on path to sustainable growth is adopted by Ad Hoc Committee of Whole on Final Review and Appraisal of United Nations plan for African economic recovery and development.
- ◆ Berlin is recommended as venue of 1993 World Conference on Human Rights.

Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has decided to deploy an additional 100 United Nations military observers to Western Sahara to verify the cease-fire which began on 6 September.

On that date, the Secretary-General sent an advance team comprising 240 United Nations personnel to the Territory. The team is a forerunner of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara -- known as MINURSO. The Security Council has endorsed the Secretary-General's decision to enlarge the advance team.

(more)

According to the United Nations plan for Western Sahara, a transitional period would begin with the cease-fire and end with the proclamation of the results of the referendum. Morocco would undertake a substantial reduction of its troops on the Territory during the transitional period.

The United Nations would organize and conduct a referendum in which the people of Western Sahara will choose between independence or integration with Morocco.

A new agenda item on the necessity of ending the United States economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba was recommended this morning by the General Committee for consideration by the General Assembly's forty-sixth session.

In a statement to the committee, Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada (Cuba) said that for more than 30 years, economic war has been waged against his country. The United States wished to avoid a discussion of its "criminal blockade", he stated, adding that although the United States believed such a discussion would be "inappropriate", no one could seriously question the relevance of the item, or the need for the General Assembly to consider it, or the necessity for an end to a policy that violated basic norms of law and ethics.

Responding, Robert B. Rosenstock (United States) said his country had been one of the earliest advocates of the liberal inscription policy. Some did not share such values and could not resist introducing items in a tendentious manner. His Government would raise no objection to inscription of the item and would discuss its substance at the appropriate time.

Two other new agenda items were also recommended for consideration directly in the plenary: Observer status for the Caribbean Community in the General Assembly; and strengthening of the coordination of United Nations emergency humanitarian assistance. A third new item, exploitation of the environment as a weapon in times of armed conflict, was recommended for consideration in the Sixth Committee (Legal).

The General Committee recommended that the Assembly include 143 items in the agenda of its current session, which began yesterday, and that it defer, until its next regular session, the items on the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India; and the question of East Timor.

The provisional agenda, as well as the Committee's recommendations for the allocation of items among the Assembly and its Main Committees, will go before the Assembly on Friday morning, 20 September.

The Committee recommended a special plenary observance, on 16 December, of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocols.

(more)

It recommended that the Assembly recess on 17 December and close the forty-sixth session on 14 September 1992.

More than one third of the \$400 million needed to fund the consolidated inter-agency appeal for the Horn of Africa was pledged at yesterday's pledging conference on emergency assistance for that region.

In a closing statement at the final meeting, James O.C. Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship, serving as the President of the pledging conference, stressed the emergency nature of the appeal, which covers Ethiopia, the Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti and Kenya. He urged governments that had not made specific pledges to do so as soon as possible.

A \$12 million aid program to provide humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance and to strengthen the technical skills of Cambodians has been approved by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The aid agreement was signed on Tuesday, 17 September, by UNDP Administrator, William H. Draper III, and the President of the Supreme National Council of Cambodia, Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

According to a press communiqué, this is the first time in 15 years that a United Nations organization has provided such aid to Cambodia. Since the mid-1970s, United Nations aid to the country has been limited to humanitarian assistance, following the civil and political crises that occurred there.

Making the announcement, Mr. Draper said the commitment was made in response to the economic and political changes now under way in Cambodia. The prospects of a comprehensive political settlement under the aegis of the United Nations were now very promising and in preparation for this, UNDP had already fielded several fact-finding missions there, at the request of the Secretary-General.

A United Nations Special Commission inspection team returned recently from the fourth of a continuing series of inspections of Iraq's ballistic missile capabilities. The team was designated to be the first to use United Nations-provided helicopters to cover the significant distances involved. According to the team, Iraq denied the entry and use of the United Nations helicopters and the team was therefore withdrawn from the country.

(more)

The 17-member team, led by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas S. Brock of the United States, was assigned the task of inspecting and monitoring the destruction of the fixed SCUD missile launchers declared by Iraq in the "Western Zone" during the period of 6 to 13 September.

Results of two inspections in the vicinity of Baghdad were significant, the team reports. Iraq had taken four of eight previously eliminated SCUD missile transport vehicles, temporarily welded them together, and moved them to a facility south of Baghdad containing missiles with a range of less than 150 kilometres. At that site an additional triple missile support not previously declared was noted and destroyed.

* * *

A new United Nations agenda to set the African continent on a path to sustainable growth and development has been adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on Final Review and Appraisal of the United Nations plan on African Economic Recovery and Development.

The result of 11 days of negotiations -- the Committee met from 3 to 14 September -- the plan calls on Africa's development partners to take bold steps to solve Africa's external debt problem, which totals more than \$270 billion. The plan also calls for the provision of additional resource flows and correction of imperfections in commodity market mechanisms.

African commitments include persistence with necessary economic reforms, improvement of human rights and the creation of the necessary environment for direct foreign and domestic investment.

The new plan for the development of Africa in the 1990s is to be considered by the General Assembly for approval this session.

* * *

Berlin has been recommended as the venue of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. The recommendation to convene the high-level gathering in Berlin for a period of two weeks was made during the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference which ended on Friday, 13 September in Geneva.

The Conference will take place 25 years after the International Conference on Human Rights, held in Tehran in 1968.

* * * * *